

Average tax bill may go up \$112 possible 15 mill education hike

The average tax bill in Halton Hills could rise as much as \$112 this year and Milton ratepayers may be forced to fork over \$75 more to pay for education in Halton.

Chairman of the Halton Board of Education finance committee Trustee Bill Lawson warned Thursday if all programs and services are maintained this year the mill rate could go up 36 to 38 per cent of 14 and 15 mills.

The cost of each mill is based on an average assessment in Halton Hills of \$7,500 and \$5,000 in Milton.

Lawson said the cost of educating each student in Halton will probably go up approximately 17 or 18 per cent this year due to inflation, if all existing programs are maintained.

He said 6.5 mills of the possible 14 or 15 mill increase will be due to a three per cent reduction of provincial grant support to Halton. Lawson added the reduction in

provincial grants alone will cause a 17 per cent mill rate increase.

"The members of the board consider that such an increase (14 or 15 mills) would be unacceptable to the ratepayers of Halton and steps will have to be taken to contain the increase within a responsible amount," Lawson declared.

The Milton trustee said the finance committee will "carefully scrutinize every aspect" of the Halton education operation so the mill rate increase can be kept as low as possible.

"It would be the hope and the intention of the committee to minimize, as much as possible, the impact of the constraints on the pupils," Lawson said.

He warned every facet of the board's operations will face constraints of some degree this year.

Reviewing the board's financial operations in the past Lawson noted education in

Halton has always been provided within provincial ceilings.

The chairman of finance committee said the board has been providing a "good, sound education system" since it was formed in 1969 and despite cost per pupil increases of 65 per cent over the last seven years it has been able to reduce the overall mill rate nine per cent. Lawson admitted one of the reasons education mill rates have been reduced despite inflation is the support payments by Queen's Park have risen from 43 per cent to 60 per cent.

In a letter to Premier William Davis, Education Minister Thomas Wells, members of cabinet and MPPs, the board outlined the possibility of 36 to 38 per cent mill rates in Halton and wondered if they will face the same sort of provincial support reduction in 1977 or if the grants from Queen's Park will be even further reduced next year.

In its letter to the province the board noted it has always operated within ceiling limits and when it was formed in 1969 it was encouraged by Queen's Park to develop new programs with the promise of gradually increased grants.

Board chairman Judy Alexander warned in the letter an increase of 36 or 38 per cent in taxes "would be unacceptable to the ratepayers in the region."

"Would it not have been more prudent on the part of the government, if such a change is necessary, that the change could have been phased over a period of time and thus given the board more lead time to adjust the situation and thus lessen the impact on the pupils?" Mrs. Alexander asked the province, referring to the cut back in grants.



ST. JOHN AMBULANCE first aid instructor Blair Beemer, (right) demonstrates to his night school class how to apply a bandage to a wound without the proper materials. Bill Lee gets a first hand view of the method as "victim". The course is at the high school on Monday evenings.

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TRAFFIC WAS HALTED IN both directions following a car-truck collision on Highway 7 just west of Crewson's Corners Thursday. Francis Foley of Queen Street remains in hospital in satisfactory condition. Mr. Foley was a

passenger in the car. Gasoline from the truck's fuel tank had to be washed from the road by the Acton Fire Department. Damage to the vehicles is estimated at \$1,900.

Car-truck collision

Resident kept in hospital

Francis Foley, 44, of Queen Street East remains in hospital in satisfactory condition with a broken right leg following a car-truck collision just west of Crewson's Corners on Highway 7 Thursday at 2 p.m.

Mr. Foley's 16-year old son Derrick, who was driving the

car, received cuts and bruises and was released after treatment. A truck passenger, Eric Lavers, 19, of Toronto received a back injury.

All three were taken to Guelph General Hospital by ambulance.

The truck driver, Jacinto Arruda, 18, of Brampton es-

caped injury. The front-end and motor of the car were damaged and the truck's gas tank ruptured, spewing fuel onto the highway.

Hose road - Acton firefighters were called to hose down the road. Traffic in both directions was stopped for a time.

The truck was following eastbound traffic when it veered into the westbound lane and the two vehicles collided, police say.

Total damage to both vehicles is estimated at \$1,900. Charges are pending.

Separate School seeks shared accommodation

Discussions will be held to discuss the possibility of Halton Separate School Board sharing pupil accommodation in Acton for use as a separate school, here.

Dr. Leno Braida, chairman of the Halton Separate School board, wrote Halton school board concerning his board's consideration of a separate school in Acton.

Director of education Em Lavender read parts of his letter at the board meeting last Thursday. It was agreed

that chairman Judy Alexander and vice-chairman Bill Herd will meet with Dr. Braida for exploratory discussions.

Dr. Braida told the county board:

Letter - "The Property and Planning Committee of the Halton Separate School Board has been considering the establishment of the Board's first separate school in the Town of Acton. The separate school board is aware, however, that

the Ministry of Education's current program of restraint in the area of capital expenditure makes an immediate building program impossible.

"To this end, a motion was passed at the December regular meeting of the Board consisting of the chairman of the Board, members of the Property and Planning Committee and Administration is established, and that the Liaison Committee initiate exploratory discussions

with the Board of Education re the possibility of 'sharing' pupil accommodation for an interim period in the town of Acton.

"The concept of 'sharing' accommodation has been a sensitive and difficult issue in certain areas of the province but because of the good relationship that exists between our boards, I feel that this matter can be discussed in an open and amicable manner."

Dr. L. Braida, Chairman

Treats northern residents

Guelph hospital wants contribution from Halton

A special report is being prepared on the use of Guelph hospitals by Halton residents, following receipt of a letter to regional chairman Allan Mason from Guelph mayor N. W. Jary asking the region to consider contributing to the financing of Guelph General Hospital.

In his letter Mayor Jary points out that 10.9 per cent of the total patient days at Guelph General Hospital and 1.0 per cent of the total patient days at St. Joseph's Hospital are used by Halton residents.

He said the usage at the General is significant "considering that our servicing of the General Hospital debt costs approximately \$125,000 per year."

Asks appointment - "Extensive usage by the residents of the Region and former County of Halton has been a continuing pattern over the years. Some years ago we made provision by a change in the special Act for the Hospital, for the County of Halton to be represented on

the Hospital Board. However, the County did not appoint a representative. There is still provision for such representation to our Board," Mayor Jary wrote.

He asked that the region consider a contribution to the hospital debt charges and an appointment to the board.

When the matter came before Halton's administration committee it was filed without any serious consideration or discussion.

But when the matter came before Council Wednesday,

Administration committee chairman David Coons and committee member Mac Anderson said the request couldn't be considered because the facility was not in the region.

They argued that consent to such a request would open the door for similar requests from Hamilton, Toronto, Mississauga and all municipalities along Halton's borders which would admit Halton people.

Not geographic - Guelph General Hospital Administrator Mr. Whitworth

Seek business levy for downtown parking

Paul Nielsen and Louis Charlebois, representing Acton Chamber of Commerce, told Halton Hills works committee Monday they will ask downtown businessmen to allow a special mill rate levy to help finance the development of downtown parking.

Mr. Nielsen told the committee at a recent Chamber of Commerce meeting the consensus of opinion among Acton businessmen was "we

just can't afford to lose any more parking spots. Customers and merchants are all saying we don't have enough parking now."

He noted the businessmen can understand why they have lost parking spots recently on Willow Street, John Street and St. Alban's Drive but "as Acton grows the parking problem will become worse. We are at the crunch now." Mr. Nielsen noted the merchants have lost

32 parking spots in the past year.

Need 50 - Mr. Nielsen explained that regardless of what the town does in the way of reconstruction of Mill Street a minimum of 50 additional parking spots is needed in downtown Acton.

He said he and Mr. Charlebois will be going to the downtown businessmen and asking them to agree to a mill

rate increase on commercial and business assessment to "cover the cost of acquiring properties for off street parking."

"We hope a greater number of merchants agree to this and then we will come back to the town and ask for a mill rate increase of about three mills. This would raise about \$22,500 a year and we intend to use this to back up a loan to buy property downtown for off street parking," he explained.

Mr. Nielsen said if a majority consensus of opinion can be reached with the downtown businessmen then they will ask the town to pass a by-law allowing the special taxation.

He predicted merchants will be receptive to the idea and thought he could have an answer back to the town in a week.

Mr. Nielsen explained the initial approach to the parking problem is being made through the Chamber of Commerce but the accumu-

Tenants flee hotel during 1:30 a.m. blaze

Tenants of the Dominion Hotel had to be evacuated during an early morning blaze Saturday, and the premises closed for the rest of the day.

Fire of unknown origin broke out at 1:30 a.m. in a locked third-floor storage room, according to Acton fire chief Mick Holmes. Extensive damage resulted.

Flames spread into the hall and one bedroom as firefighters fought to keep the fire under control, the chief said. The second and third storeys received extensive smoke damage as it billowed throughout the corridors and rooms. The entire structure received water damage. Mr. Holmes said water got into the walls and poured down the rear of the hotel, into the kitchen and other rooms.

Baron hearing Friday

This Friday Horst Baron will appear in provincial court in Milton for his preliminary hearing on three charges of attempted murder. He appeared in court last Friday but the case was adjourned until this Friday.

The Crown Attorney Jim Treloven intends to prosecute the case himself. The trial is expected to begin about the end of March.

Baron was charged October 27 with three counts of attempted murder. Victims were his wife Hilda, 50, and a man and his son who boarded at the Baron farm just east of Acton, Gus Mayer, 49, and Wayne, nine. All three were shot in the chest with a .38 calibre revolver, for which Baron had a permit.

All three have since recovered.

Baron has been in custody in the provincial jail at Milton for the past three months.

Column begins

Regional councillor Pat McKenzie today joins the ranks of Members of Parliament in providing for his constituents a column of information and comment. Sitting on both region and area councils, Mr. McKenzie is aware of what is going on at both levels of government.

He'll be writing his column at intervals and hopes to make regional living a little easier to understand for the people of this district.



SIX FOOT one inch tall David Swetman stands beside a huge column of ice which, until the recent mild spell, stood between his store and the Bank of Montreal on Mill Street. The ice formed from a constant trickle of water escaping from between the store's roof and a thick crust of ice.